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SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: IRELAND CONDEMNS RUSSIAN RECOGNITION OF SOUTH OSSETIA AND ABKHAZIA

REF: SECSTATE 91894

Classified By: Pol/Econ Section Chief Ted Pierce;
Reasons 1.4 (B) and (D).

¶1. (U) The following statement on Russia's recognition of South Ossetia and Abkhazia as independent states was released by Irish Foreign Minister Michael Martin on August 26, 2008.

Begin Statement

The Minister for Foreign Affairs, Micheal Martin TD, has condemned today's decision by Russia to recognise the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

The Minister said: "This deeply regrettable decision is contrary to the principles of Georgia's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity. Moreover, it can only complicate the urgent task of finding political solutions to the acute difficulties in the region and to the wider international tensions which have developed over the past weeks."

End Statement

¶2. (C) Comment: While the Irish were dismayed at Georgia's provocation in invading South Ossetia, they have been much more worried about the disproportionate Russian response, its implications for future EU/Russian relations (especially in the realms of security, energy, and trade), and the encouragement of regional fragmentation in Europe. They will carry this message to the September 1 high-level EU meeting called by France to discuss a common stand on the situation. However, given Ireland's reduced stature in the EU due to its rejection of the Lisbon Treaty in June, Ireland is certain to support whatever consensus emerges at that meeting.

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